

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
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**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC SECURITY,
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION, AND CYBERSECURITY
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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Good morning Chairman Lungren, Congresswoman Sanchez, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am pleased to have this opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to report on the performance and management of our Nation's aviation screeners. Passenger and baggage screening is an essential component of TSA's layered approach to aviation security. The tools, training, and technology that the TSA provides to our screening workforce are the keys to our continued success in deterring potential terrorist threats and maintaining the security of our civil aviation system. Since the tragic attacks occurred earlier this month in London, the public is obviously focused on the security of our rail and bus systems. However, the Nation's aviation system is still a significant target and we must continue to be vigilant. Screening passengers and their property in a manner that ensures security and operational efficiency requires TSA to maximize all available resources, including personnel, technology, and partnerships with the private sector. We are constantly seeking new ways to meet the challenge of staying well ahead of those who attempt to foil our security measures by using all of our resources to the fullest extent.

Screener Training

TSA has initiated efforts to enhance screener training and we believe implementation of these efforts is essential to improving passenger and baggage screener training and performance. Such initiatives include reviews of our screener training programs, the development of the High Speed Operational Connectivity (HI-SOC) program, improving our Online Learning Center (OLC), and the development of internal controls that clearly define responsibilities for monitoring and documenting the completion of required training.

In order to become a certified screener, our screeners must complete a minimum of forty hours of classroom training, sixty hours of on-the-job training, and successfully complete all written and practical exams. TSA also requires recurrent screener training for certified screeners in order to maintain and refresh their skills, to learn changes in standard operating procedures, and to complete any necessary remedial training. A standard of three hours of duty time per week per screener is used by Federal Security Directors (FSD) to allow screeners to accomplish recurrent training. In addition to

training requirements, all screeners must meet annual recertification standards, passing a Standard Operating Procedures Job Knowledge Test, an X-ray Image Interpretation Test, and a Practical Skills Demonstration, as well as achieve 'met or exceeded' expectations on their performance assessment. The screener recertification program for 2004-2005 began on September 20, 2004, and recently concluded on June 30, 2005. During this period, approximately 39,000 Federal and contract screeners were recertified and the national pass rate was 98.7%.

The Office of Workforce Performance and Training (WPT) is currently reviewing the new hire screener training program in order to structure the program so it is a stable, repeatable process, and reduces costs while maintaining the high quality of the training. The new hire training program meets the basic screener training needs of major airports, but has the flexibility to cater to the operational requirements of Category III and Category IV airports. This new approach will allow for a screener to be operational in less time than the current new hire training cycle. The phased approach model is based on the premise that the new screener should be trained in skills that are critical for the screener to achieve an independent operational role. However, the training should be structured to build on previous phases and allow the screener enough time to gain knowledge and practice in the lab and on the job to master the basic screening skills.

TSA also conducted a one-week Recurrent Training Workshop to evaluate the current status of the Recurrent Screener training program. As a result of this workshop, TSA's web-based training courses will be updated to include new topics, such as breach recognition and prevention, breach response, and situational awareness. Several existing courses will also be updated or modified to meet our current training needs. Revisions to training requirements for screeners returning to duty after prolonged absences (thirty days or more) were also recommended to provide screeners with ample opportunities to refresh screening skills after long periods away from duty. Another positive result from the workshop is the development of an annual training plan template that clearly delineates recurrent training guidelines into refresher training and skills currency training.

TSA is also partnering with one of our private sector screening pilot "PP5" airports to adapt their On Screen Alarm Resolution Protocol Recurrent Training Materials into a training package that can be deployed nationwide to all screeners. This protocol allows screeners to evaluate items causing an alarm and potentially clear those items without subjecting the bag to a secondary screening process. This method has proven to be an effective, sound, and safe process. As of July 15, 2005, TSA has trained 8,689 screeners using this protocol with a passing rate of 97.3%. We foresee meeting TSA's goal to introduce this method to all airports with explosives detection systems (EDS) early in FY 2006.

From the standpoint of training delivery, one of our most significant accomplishments is the TSA OLC. This system is available to screeners though the TSA intranet or a secure site on the World Wide Web. This system makes available over 350 general training and development courses in addition to TSA-specific training. Upgrades to the OLC were implemented in early April 2005 resulting in improved reporting tools which allow TSA

to create tailored reports that training coordinators and Headquarters program managers can run on demand. New report products can be developed and implemented quickly when new requirements are identified. These report products will reflect a broad range of TSA training programs— Screener Training Exercises and Assessments (STEAs) local testing, three hour recurrent training, mandatory employee training status and screener basic/on-the-job training status. This summer, we are also planning to expand the Performance Management Information System (PMIS) to include select OLC training summary data. This data will be available to managers and will include the ability to correlate training performance data with other TSA source data for cause and effect and trending analyses.

All training accomplishments must be documented in the OLC. A management directive mandates use of the OLC for documenting training records. This directive was revised in July 2005 to strengthen and clarify training recordkeeping requirements. TSA management routinely monitors national compliance with mandatory training requirements and recurrent training guidelines. Local FSDs are responsible for ensuring compliance on an individual basis. In March 2005, TSA Executive Leadership sent out a memorandum to advise all Assistant Administrators and FSDs that managers and supervisors will be held accountable for subordinates' completion of all mandatory training requirements. This accountability will be inserted into the performance plans of all TSA supervisors for FY 2006.

In order to ensure that all screeners have access to training available in the OLC and to provide TSA management with documentation of screener training, TSA has developed a plan to facilitate connectivity to all TSA airport training facilities. The HI-SOC program is a detailed plan and corresponding schedule for ensuring that training centers in airports receive high speed connectivity. The HI-SOC program includes a detailed plan for Wide Area Network (WAN) connectivity to TSA Airports including local area networking (LAN) to link operations centers, training centers and break rooms, baggage screening areas and checkpoints/passenger screening areas, and FSDs. The WAN will also facilitate XP migration, email migration, remote access to these systems via a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and facilitate intelligent phone deployment.

Screener Performance

Utilizing three primary performance measures, TSA has developed several baselines for screener performance. These performance measures are common to screeners at all airports with Federal screeners as well as at the five airports currently in the Screening Partnership Program (SPP)¹¹. Those same criteria would be applied as well to any airports that are currently federalized, but which may choose to participate in the privatized screening program in the future under the SPP. The privatized airports may also design

¹¹ The five airports currently using private screeners are San Francisco International Airport, Kansas City International Airport, Greater Rochester International Airport, Jackson Hole Airport, and Tupelo Regional Airport.

performance measures other than those in common with the federalized airports in order to measure specific areas of contractor performance or other areas deemed of interest. Airports that enroll in the SPP will be required by their contractual arrangements to ensure that their screener performance meets or exceeds that in place for the federalized airports through measurement of performance.

TSA measures screener performance by utilizing the following indicators:

- Percentage of screeners scoring above the national average on Threat Image Projection (TIP);
- Percentage of screeners scoring 85% or better on their annual performance recertification examinations on their first attempt, and;
- Results of screeners' annual performance reviews.

Threat Image Projection (TIP) is a program whereby false images of weapons and other deadly and dangerous prohibited items are displayed on the X-ray screens of screening equipment. The screener is tested on the percentages that are correctly identified. TIP is currently active on over 1,800 TIP Ready X-ray (TRX) machines at all passenger screening locations nationwide. TIP serves as an invaluable, multifunctional system that extends well beyond an evaluation tool. It provides immediate feedback and functions as a reinforcement system that increases screener accuracy. TIP enhances screener attentiveness and vigilance through random and periodic presentations and exposure to new and emerging threats that they may not normally see during the routine course of passenger screening. TIP results, which have been collected and analyzed on a monthly basis since January 2004, have shown a steady increase in screener performance on threat detection.

Another important measure of screener effectiveness is evaluating the percent of screeners scoring 85% or better on their first attempt of their annual re-certification examination. TSA considers the first attempt score a more accurate representation of the "current operating proficiency" of the screener before any targeted remediation is provided to the screener. In conjunction with screeners' annual performance reviews, these performance measures provide an assessment of screener performance at both federalized and the privatized airports.

Screening Performance

In addition to the screener performance measures, TSA has developed screening performance measures at the national level. To measure screening performance, TSA developed the Baggage Screening Program Index and the Passenger Screening Program Index. Each is a composite index that tracks overall screening program performance in the areas of security screening and customer satisfaction. TSA's screening programs and can be tracked periodically to assess progress.

The tools used to measure effectiveness or probability of detection for screeners and machines include TIP results, covert test results, Screener Training Exercises and

Assessments (STEA) test results and screening machine performance data. The TSA Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review (OIAPR) conducts covert tests to assess the effectiveness of aviation, maritime, and land security by using special techniques to replicate current terrorist threats in order to improve the safety and security of transportation modes. OIAPR airport covert testing protocols include penetrating passenger security screening checkpoints without detection with prohibited handguns (inoperable) and inert explosives, penetrating access control points in sterile and non-sterile areas, and hiding inert explosive devices in checked baggage. OIAPR covert tests provide instantaneous feedback to the screeners, their supervisors, and TSA management to improve existing airport security.

OIAPR produces classified monthly reports for senior TSA management that are designed to identify vulnerabilities in transportation systems, including equipment, policy, and personnel. Information reported by OIAPR allows TSA officials to develop system-wide strategies to improve airport security. TSA has made changes to policies, training, and equipment based on recommendations specified in monthly OIAPR reports. For example, TSA initiated "Step Forward" procedures for wanding individuals wearing long garments at passenger screening checkpoints. As of June 2005, OIAPR has tested 535 airports (93 airports have been tested multiple times). OIAPR commenced covert testing in September 2002 and, to date, has conducted 3,464 checkpoint tests, 757 checked baggage tests, and 13,056 access tests. OIAPR will complete a three-year covert testing cycle at all airports nationwide at the end of FY 05.

Screener Training Exercises and Assessments are utilized at the local level by the FSDs having individuals unknown to the screeners attempt to pass prohibited items through the checkpoints and in baggage. TSA uses screening machine performance data to determine the probabilities of detection. The probability of detection by both screeners and machines for passenger and baggage screening is classified and I would be happy to present this data in a secure forum.

Another important area of performance measurement is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction performance measure information is obtained through The Customer Satisfaction Index for Aviation (CSI-A). The annually computed index includes the results of a customer intercept survey, the results from a national survey completed by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) at the Department of Transportation, and the trend in complaints and compliments that TSA receives through its contact center and at the airports. Additionally, TSA has developed packages for airport-initiated customer surveys. These allow individual airports to measure customer satisfaction by selecting questions from an approved list; those that they feel would provide important customer feedback. For Fiscal Years 2004/2005, the overall CSI-A is 78% on a scale of 100%.

TSA continually strives to develop and provide the best technology, training and operational procedures to our screeners to allow them to accomplish their screening mission in an effective and efficient manner. We have designed a program that focuses specifically on human factors and the steps we can take to continue to improve screener performance. In July 2003, TSA completed a comprehensive Passenger Screening

Performance Improvement Study which focused on human factors and utilized principles of Human Performance Technology. Through this process, TSA evaluated the nature of the screening work tasks, the screening workplace environment, and screener performance. This study identified potential systemic root causes that may contribute to poor performance and recommended solutions. As a result of the 2003 study, TSA initiated numerous other human factors engineering studies to address screener performance deficiencies. This wide range of human factors studies is helping us identify solutions that may be implemented through training, procedures, or technologies designed in certain manners.

Another factor that often affects screener performance is injury. TSA is making every effort to identify, mitigate, or eliminate factors that may be contributing to screeners' on-the-job injury rate. We have also implemented a Nurse Intervention Case Management Pilot Program at thirty-nine airports in November 2004. During this pilot, a Certified Nurse Case Manager manages injury claims telephonically or in person with interviews and visits to employees, supervisors, and physicians' offices, ensuring that injured screeners receive the best medical care. The focus is on the first 45 days after injury to ensure that appropriate diagnosis and care are expedited, which ultimately facilitates the screener's return to work. Prior to the pilot program start-up, the average lost production day count was 45 days per injury. Since the pilot began, the average has dropped to 12 days, resulting in a cost savings of about \$261,692. During the first eight months of this pilot, the total cost avoidance is estimated to be \$5.5M. TSA plans to expand this program nationally soon.

In addition to this pilot program, TSA is working to address screener injury rates in many other ways. For example, we established a new cross-functional screener injury task force to identify possible solutions for reducing screener injury rates. At the airport level, TSA created Safety Action Teams (SAT), comprised of management and employees, to identify and facilitate the resolution of safety issues and problems locally. Training also plays an important role in injury prevention so we developed 12 training courses aimed at injury prevention. Technology also plays a key role in injury reduction. Since the installation of in-line baggage handling systems at certain airports, the injury and illness rates at those airports have declined. These initiatives are just a few of the many ways TSA is working to improve screener performance by reducing injury rates.

To meet our demanding staffing needs, TSA has identified elements within the staffing standard which comprise the Screener Allocation Model. This model includes the equipment fielded at all airports and associated screener allocations. There are a number of factors that can impact the size of the screener workforce, including wait times, detection technology, checkpoint configuration, airline load factors, and schedules. TSA has set out to develop a more robust and dynamic tool to better define aviation security staffing requirements at the Nation's airports. The Screening Allocation Model provides TSA with an objective measure for screener staffing levels at each airport. In the future, In the future, TSA will be able to use this model to objectively reapportion its authorized screener workforce of 45K FTE. A report to Congress containing the elements of the

Screening Allocation Model is currently under Departmental review for submission to Congress.

Checkpoint and Baggage Screening Technology

As TSA recently testified before this subcommittee on July 19, 2005, the TSA technology program is designed to provide optimal tools to our screeners. In support of screening checkpoint operations at airports throughout the country, TSA uses Enhanced Walk Through Metal Detectors (EWTMD), TIP-ready X-ray machines (TRX) and Explosive Trace Detection (ETD) units. To ensure that we continue to comply with the requirement to screen one hundred percent of checked baggage at all of the Nation's commercial airports, TSA uses ETD and EDS equipment. In-line EDS are currently deployed as a cost effective screening process at high volume airports.

TSA is also developing new technologies in support of passenger and baggage screening. We recently completed pilot projects for explosives detection trace portals and we are running an ongoing pilot project for explosives detection trace document scanners. Other significant technologies currently under evaluation include an automated EDS for carry-on baggage and a whole body imaging technology (x-ray backscatter) to improve the detection of explosives and prohibited items on people who walk through checkpoints. Another priority is the development of a technology solution to more effectively screen cast and prosthetic devices for weapons and prohibited items. TSA is also testing a newly certified EDS unit—the Reveal CT-80—that should provide TSA with an alternative to in-line systems for some airports.

As recommended in the General Accounting Office (GAO) December 2004 report titled "Aviation Security: Systematic Planning Needed to Optimize the Deployment of Checked Baggage Screening Systems," TSA is already in the process of developing a strategic plan to determine which airports would benefit from in-line screening solutions as well as those that would benefit from replacing ETDs with EDS equipment. Additionally, TSA continually reviews and, as needed, refines the protocols and training of all screening procedures to include primary ETD screening for checked baggage.

TSA believes that increasing automated detection increases security capabilities, potentially minimizing personnel costs and staffing requirements, while increasing throughput capacity. Our efforts will focus on increasing our technological capabilities to keep pace with potential terrorists, whom we must assume are constantly examining how they can penetrate security at our Nation's airports.

Private sector partnerships

Another important resource we rely upon to accomplish our screening mission are public-private partnerships. TSA is currently operating several programs that leverage resources offered by the private sector, including the SPP and the private sector screening pilot

known as PP5². The SPP is a leading example of how TSA is partnering with the private sector to accomplish our screening mission and meet this important Congressional mandate. As required by the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), TSA established the SPP to permit airports to apply to use private, rather than Federal, passenger and baggage screeners beginning on November 19, 2004. As ATSA requires, these private screeners must meet all requirements and qualifications applicable to Federal screeners concerning hiring and training, pay and benefits for private screeners must not be lower than Federal screeners, private screeners must be overseen by Federal Government supervisors, and screening services must be equal to or greater than the level provided by Federal screeners. TSA regards security as non-negotiable and will remain faithful to its core mission by ensuring that participants in SPP comply not only with the specific terms of ATSA but also other applicable statutory and other Federally-mandated requirements that affect aviation security.

TSA established the SPP Office to provide financial oversight, ongoing operational support, communications, and transition planning for airports that apply to participate in the program. To date, the agency has received seven applications for the program, including two applications from the Elko Regional Airport in Elko, Nevada and Sioux Falls Regional Airport in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In addition, the five PP5 Pilot airports have submitted their applications to move into the SPP.

In establishing the SPP, TSA has sought to create a true partnership that leverages the strengths of the private and public sectors in order to fully capture the best of both worlds and work together toward our common objective—to ensure the security of the Nation’s aviation security in a cost-effective and customer-oriented manner.

TSA has made great strides to provide the best training, equipment, and technology to all of our Nation’s aviation screeners. In order to continue this progress and meet the challenge of staying ahead of those who pose a threat to our aviation system, TSA will continue to maximize all available resources—personnel, technology and partnerships with the private sector—in order to accomplish our mission of ensuring the security of the Nation’s aviation system.

Chairman Lungren, Congresswoman Sanchez, and other distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.

² This program was also established by ATSA (P.L. 107-71) and comprises the following five airports: San Francisco International Airport, Kansas City International Airport, Greater Rochester International Airport, Jackson Hole Airport, and Tupelo Regional Airport.